ATLAS

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY

AUG.

10¢

OVER AND OVER THE VOICE REPEATED IN THEIR HORRIFIED BRAINS...
DON'T LOOK!... DON'T LOOK!... DON'T LOOK!...

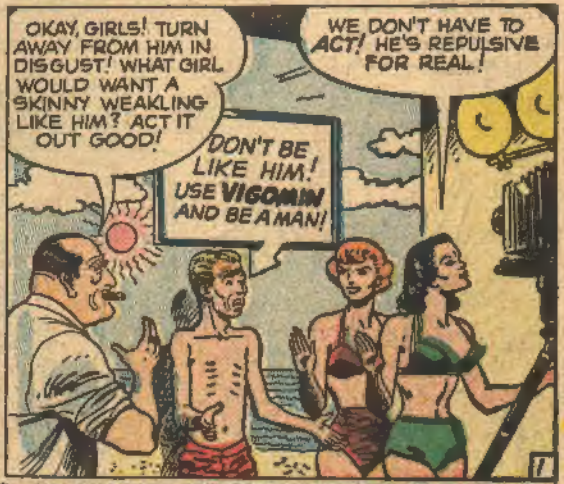
"DON'T LOOK!"

BEWARE THE WEAKLING! HADES HATH NO FURY LIKE THAT OF THE WORM WHEN HE TURNS! THAT, IN ITS STARK SIMPLICITY, IS THE TERRORIZING TALE OF ...

the SCARECROW

I'M TIM BLAKE...YOU DON'T KNOW ME, BUT YOU KNOW MY TYPE... THE TYPICAL SKINNY, UNDERSIZED RUNT, THE KIND THAT ALWAYS GETS BULLIED AND SHOVED AROUND...

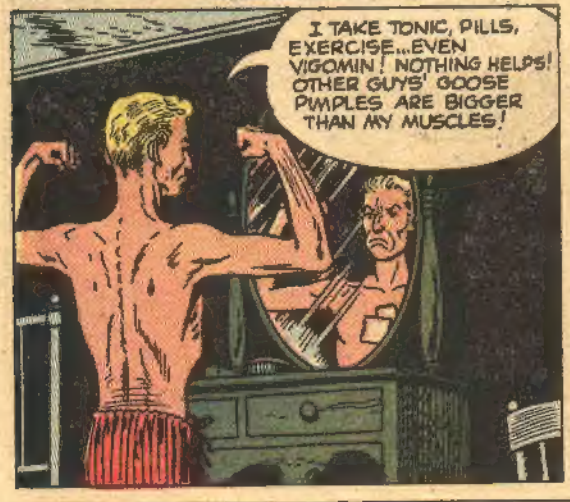
SCARECROW! ALWAYS THAT NAME HOUNDED ME! IN FACT, I MADE MY LIVING POSING AS THE HUMAN "SCARECROW" IN THOSE WELL-KNOWN HEALTH ADS!


OKAY, GIRLS! TURN AWAY FROM HIM IN DISGUST! WHAT GIRL WOULD WANT A SKINNY WEAKLING LIKE HIM? ACT IT OUT GOOD!
WE DON'T HAVE TO ACT! HE'S REPULSIVE FOR REAL!
DON'T BE LIKE HIM! USE VIGOMIN AND BE A MAN!

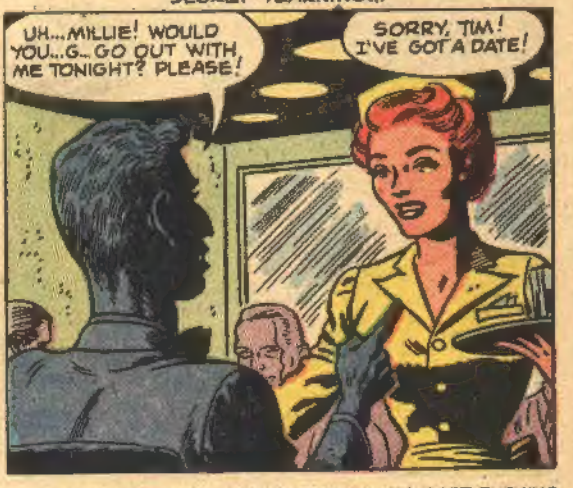
ALL NAMES AND PLACES IN THESE STORIES ARE FICTITIOUS. ANY SIMILARITY BETWEEN ACTUAL PERSONS OR PLACES AND THOSE USED IN THESE STORIES IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

NO, IT WASN'T PLAY-ACTING! ALL GIRLS TURNED AWAY FROM ME LOATHINGLY, IN DROVES...

THAT WAS THE FRUSTRATED, JOYLESS, SHUNNED LIFE THAT I LED UNTIL I HATED MY PUNY EXCUSE FOR A PHYSICAL BODY...

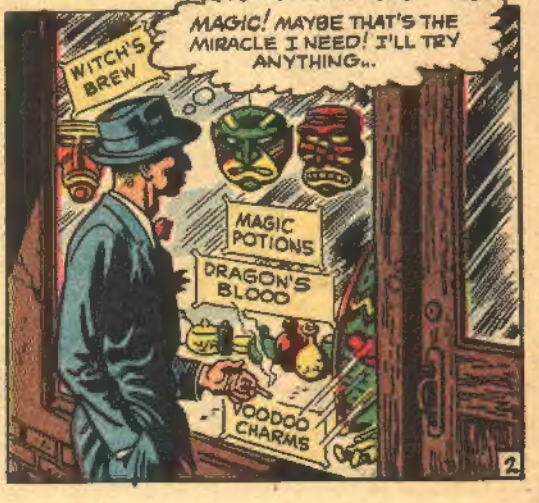


THE OTHER GIRLS DIDN'T MATTER SO MUCH BUT MILLIE DID! A WAITRESS AT THE RESTAURANT I FREQUENTED! ONE DAY WHEN I SCREWED UP MY COURAGE TO VOICE MY SECRET YEARNING...



YEAH, WITH ME... I CAN'T HIT A LITTLE WORM LIKE YOU! BUT JUST KEEP AWAY FROM MY GIRL, SCARECROW! UNNERSTAND?
Y...YES, S...SIR!
IF ONLY I WERE BIG AND STRONG ENOUGH TO FIGHT BACK LIKE A MAN! BUT IT'D TAKE A MIRACLE TO MAKE A MAN OUT OF ME!

I WANDERED THE DARK STREETS ALL THAT EVENING... TORTURED, AGONIZED, CRUSHED! IT WAS THEN I CAME ACROSS THE QUEER LITTLE SHOP...



WILD HOPE SEIZED ME AND I ENTERED! THE OLD GNOME-LIKE PROPRIETOR MADE ME THINK OF A WIZARD OF LEGENDARY DAYS! AND AS IF READING MY MIND...

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED, THE POTION OF POWER! OVERNIGHT IT WILL BUILD YOU UP BIG AND STRONG... A MAN AMONG MEN!
WHAT CAN I LOSE FOR 50¢? OKAY! I'LL TRY IT!
50¢

AH, BUT WAIT! THE POTION OF POWER IS CHEAP, YES... BUT IT'S THE ANTIDOTE THAT IS EXPENSIVE... $100 PLEASE!
ANTIDOTE? WHAT DO I WANT THAT FOR? IF THE STUFF WORKS, I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T WANT TO STOP IT, WOULD I? AND $100! ARE YOU MAD?
$100

I SHOOK OFF THE OLD MAN'S ATTEMPTS TO SWINDLE ME AND HURRIED HOME, EAGER TO TRY THE STUFF I'D BOUGHT...

THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN I AWOKE...

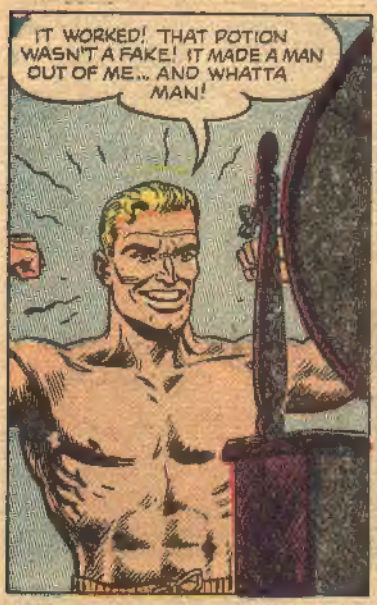
HOLY SMOKES, I RIPPED MY PAJAMAS TO SHREDS DURING THE NIGHT! I MUST HAVE TOSSED AND TURNED... GOOD HEAVENS! MY ARM... IT... IT'S ALL MUSCLE!

THE OTHER ARM WAS THE SAME...

MY RIGHT LEG TOO...

AND MY LEFT LEG...

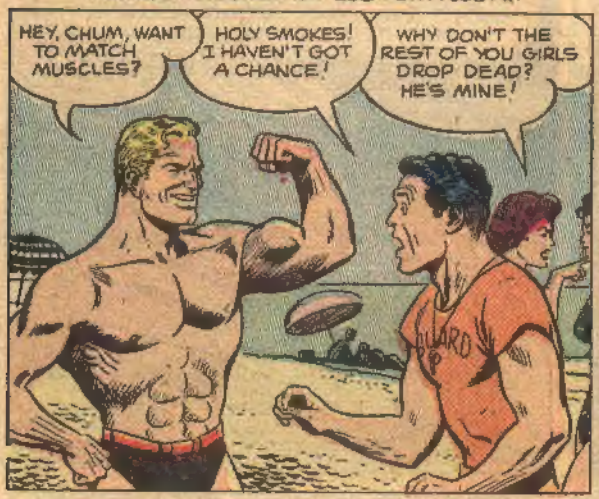
AND MY CHEST!



HOW CAN I DESCRIBE THE REST OF THAT GLORIOUS DAY? FOR ME, IT WAS SHEER TRIUMPH AS I QUICKLY BOUGHT A NEW SUIT AND WALKED DOWN THE STREET... NO, I SWAGGERED...

BUT FIRST, I HAD OTHER IMPORTANT AND DELIGHTFUL THINGS TO DO...

LATER, AT THE BATHING BEACH, WHERE THAT LIFEGUARD ALWAYS KNOCKED MY EGO FOR A LOOP...

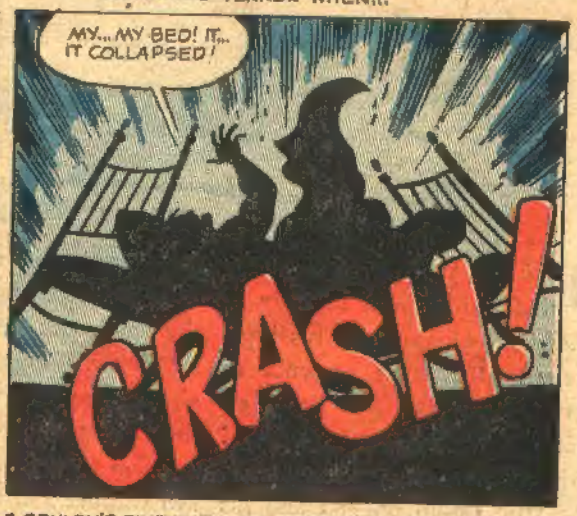


BUT THE CROWNING TRIUMPH WAS THAT EVENING, AS MILLIE'S BOY FRIEND CALLED, AND...

YES, I WAS IN MY GLORY! ALL MY PENT-UP RAGE BURST FORTH SAVAGELY! AND I WAS CRUEL, AS THEY HAD BEEN CRUEL TO ME, NOT STOPPING TO THINK THAT TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT...

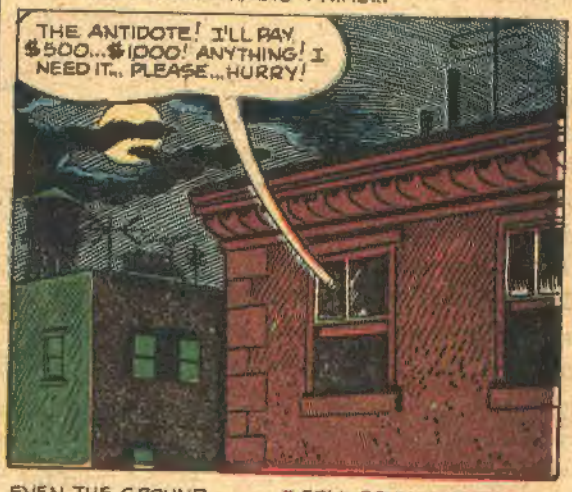
THE PENDULUM SWUNG TOO FAR THE OTHER WAY! DOMINEERING, BRUTAL, I HAD BULLIED MILLIE INTO SUBMISSION, BEFORE THE EVENING WAS OVER..

AND THE PENDULUM OF FATE KEPT SWINGING THE OTHER WAY! THAT NIGHT, I AWAKENED IN THE DARK, IN GIBBERING TERROR WHEN...



I STAGGERED TO A CHAIR... AND WHEN I SAT DOWN...

I COULDN'T FIND THE LIGHT SWITCH! AND THEN I UNDERSTOOD, AND YELLED WILDLY! I SCREECHED FOR THE LITTLE OLD SHOPKEEPER TO COME WITH HIS OTHER MAGIC PHIAL...



SUDDENLY THE FLOOR UNDER ME CREAKED AND GAVE WAY.

THE GREAT WEIGHT OF MY BODY PLUMMETED ME DOWN THRU THREE FLOORS...

EVEN THE GROUND COULDN'T STOP THE FORCE OF MY ENORMOUS BODY...

I FELL, SPUN, TWISTED AND PLUNGED THRU THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH...

THE PACT

THE tall, young man sat at his desk and stared steadily at the sheet of paper in his typewriter. One more sentence to write and then his book on witchcraft would be finished! He was tired . . . The door to his attic studio opened and his young wife, Frances, came in and placed a tray on his already cluttered desk.

"I know you won't eat until you finish your last chapter," she said, "so I brought you some cold cuts of meat, a glass of milk, and a slice of apple pie. I'm going to bed . . . guess you'll be here until morning."

Henry Conrad turned toward his wife and smiled. Then he looked at that single sheet of paper and sighed. He needed more information about the past to finish his book and he was stuck.

"It was swell of Aunt Agatha to tell us we could spend the summer here in this old colonial house while she went to Europe. The atmosphere is perfect. It was in this very house that my ancestor, Branders Conrad, was accused of practising witchcraft. Most people are still under the impression that a witch is only a female. They don't know a witch can also be a man. That's why Morrison and Linster, the publishers, asked me to write a book on witchcraft in old colonial days. If I could only find the evidence, it would show that people did think Branders Conrad secretly made a pact with the devil. But how can I prove it? I can't logically interview either Branders Conrad or the devil. Yet, I have to give my opinion at the end of the book. No wonder I'm tired."

Frances Conrad knew from past experience, what to do under these circumstances. She kissed her husband goodnight and then tiptoed out of the room.

"Don't work later than 3 in the morning," she advised him.

"You won't have to worry about company coming to visit us tonight. It's really pouring cats and dogs. Goodnight, darling, and I hope you find the answers to those questions."

Henry went back to some of the old manuscripts he had borrowed from the State University . . . records of old witchcraft trials. Hours passed as he concentrated on . . . suddenly, he heard footsteps!

"Pardon me," said an unfamiliar voice, "But I thought I might be able to help you. Everyone in the village knows that the young and brilliant writer, Mr. Henry Conrad, is at present busily engaged on a book concerning the art and practises of witchcraft in ye olden days."

Henry turned around and saw a man of middle height. The face was wrinkled but there was a peculiar gleam in his sunken black eyes. The stranger wore an old blue coat and pantaloons of a bygone day. He might have been seventy or eighty. Without invitation, the man limped over to a chair and seated himself.

"Of course you want to know my name," he began, in an accent that seemed strange and out of date, "and I have many names in many lands. Some people spend a lifetime looking for me. You might refer to me as the Uninvited Guest. Though I am sure you won't be shocked if I told you I were Satan himself."

Henry could hardly keep from smiling. He had half a mind to throw the old gentleman out but then he decided he'd humor the stranger and perhaps learn something about the past. So half-jokingly, he remarked.

"My ancestor, Branders Conrad, was accused of making a secret pact with the devil. And since you say you're Satan, that means with you. He sold his soul and in return got the power of second sight so he could look into the future. Can you tell me something about this pact? The reference books I've examined have very little on the subject."

The Uninvited Guest arose from his chair and bowed. There was a funny little smile playing across his lips. He went to the side of the wall and actually

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT STORY...

DON'T LOOK!

NO! NO! GET AWAY FROM ME! WHAT DO YOU WANT IN HERE?
I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU! SOMETHING THAT WILL EITHER MAKE YOU A MILLIONAIRE OR DRIVE YOU MAD!
A SPINE-TINGLING JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY!
IF A MADMAN COMES UP TO YOU AND WANTS TO SHOW YOU THE CONTENTS OF A STRANGE PACKAGE, RUN...CALL THE POLICE...OR THE INSANE ASYLUM, BUT ABOVE ALL...
DON'T LOOK!
JAY SCOTT PIKE

WHO WOULD EXPECT A THING LIKE THAT TO HAPPEN IN THE OFFICE OF A RESPECTABLE YOUNG ATTORNEY? WHO WOULD THINK OF FINDING MYSTERY AMONG HIGHLY-POLISHED LEATHER CHAIRS AND MUSTY, OLD LAW BOOKS...??
HOW DARE YOU BURST INTO THIS OFFICE LIKE THAT? GET OUT BEFORE I...
NOW...NOW...DON'T GET EXCITED! I KNOW YOU'RE A PATENT ATTORNEY! WE CAN BOTH MAKE MILLIONS!

GET OUT OR I'LL CALL THE POLICE!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I HAVE HERE A STRANGE INVENTION, A MIRROR THAT WILL LET YOU SEE HOW ANYONE WILL LOOK AT ANYTIME IN THE FUTURE!

A MANIAC! IT'S FUNNY HOW OLD HE LOOKS, AND YET IT'S NOT REAL AGE! HE'S A YOUNG GUY MADE OLD BY INSANITY!
Y'SEE, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS THINK ABOUT PEOPLE AND HOW FAR IN THE FUTURE YOU WANT TO SEE THEIR FACES...THEN LOOK INTO THE MIRROR, AND THEY'RE THERE!

JUST THINK OF WHAT PEOPLE WOULD GIVE FOR A MIRROR LIKE THIS! MEN COULD USE IT TO THINK OF WHAT THEIR WIVES WOULD LOOK LIKE IN TEN YEARS! ACTORS, PRODUCERS... WE COULD SELL ONE TO EVERYBODY!
HE'S REAL..Y MAD! I'D BETTER HUMOR HIM AWHILE AND CALL THE INSANE ASYLUM TO COME AND GET HIM!

BUT YOU'LL SOON FIND OUT THE STRANGEST THING OF ALL! LOOK INTO THAT MIRROR AND SEE WHAT YOU'LL LOOK LIKE IN FIVE YEARS!!
OF COURSE, OF COURSE, OLD CHAP! BUT YOU'D BETTER WAIT HERE A MINUTE WHILE I TELL MY SECRETARY NOT TO LET ANYONE DISTURB US!

BUT ONCE HE'S OUTSIDE THE OFFICE, HAROLD WHITNEY MAKES A BEE-LINE FOR THE TELEPHONE...
THAT GUY'S A MANIAC! HE TELLS ME THAT IF YOU THINK ABOUT SOMEONE AND LOOK IN THE MIRROR YOU'LL SEE HOW HE LOOKS IN THE FUTURE! I'M CALLING THE NUT HOUSE!
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! D-DO YOU THINK HE MIGHT BE DANGEROUS?

SEAGATE ASYLUM? THIS IS HAROLD WHITNEY, PATENT ATTORNEY! YOU'D BETTER SEND OVER A COUPLE OF ATTENDANTS ..THERE'S A MANIAC BOTHERING US!
IT WOULD REALLY BE SOMETHING IF IT WORKED! I WONDER WHAT I'LL LOOK LIKE IN TEN YEARS??

EEEEEKKK! NO! NO! WHIT, LOOK!

WHAT TH..? YES, I SEE IT! BUT IT CAN'T BE! I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT... IT'S JUST A TRICK OF SOME KIND!
NO, YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER! IT'S TRUE... I KNOW IT'S TRUE! I'LL BE AN OLD HAG IN ANOTHER TEN YEARS!

DON'T TALK LIKE A SIMPERING IDIOT! I SAY IT MUST BE A TRICK! LET'S TRY THINKING OF SOME OTHER PEOPLE AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!
A-ALL RIGHT (SOB) LET'S SEE...

AND SO THE STRANGE MIRROR IS PUT TO THE TEST, PROBING INTO THE FUTURE, REVEALING THE RAVAGES OF TIME ON THE HUMAN FACE! SOME PEOPLE AGE GENTLY AND RETAIN THEIR HANDSOMENESS! OTHERS... BECOME UGLY!

IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG FOR A PATENT ATTORNEY TO FIGURE THE FINANCIAL ANGLES ON A THING LIKE THAT! HE FORMS HIS PLANS SWIFTLY...
YOU SEE?? IT'S TRUE! AND I DON'T EVEN HAVE A HUSBAND YET!
LOOK, STOP YOUR CRYING AND LISTEN! I WANT YOU TO FORGET THAT YOU EVER SAW THIS MIRROR OR THE OLD MAN! FORGET THE WHOLE THING!

IT'S LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY! ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS LET THEM TAKE HIM AWAY TO THE NUT HOUSE, AND THEN I CAN KEEP THIS THING FOR MYSELF!

LAWYERS ARE GOOD ACTORS AND HAROLD WHITNEY IS NO EXCEPTION! HE PRETENDS TO BE FRIENDLY TO THE STRANGE, OLD MAN...
YEAH, OLD FELLA, QUITE A LITTLE GADGET YOU'VE GOT THERE! I THINK THAT WE CAN REALLY DO SOMETHING WITH THE MIRROR! WHERE'D YOU GET IT?
WELL, I TELL YOU IT'S A FUNNY THING! I GOT IT FROM AN OLD GUY A LONG TIME AGO, AN' NOBODY WOULD EVER LOOK AT IT!
WELL, NOW I'VE SEEN IT, AND WE CAN HAVE IT PATENTED, IF YOU'LL TELL ME HOW IT'S MADE!
I DUNNO HOW IT'S MADE! LIKE I TOLD YOU I GOT IT FROM THE OLD GEEZER! FUNNY THING IS, AT FIRST I THOUGHT HE WAS A LITTLE LOONY!
SUDDENLY THE DOOR TO THE OFFICE OPENS! THE MEN IN WHITE COME IN ANSWER TO WHITNEY'S CALL...
THERE HE IS! THAT'S THE OLD BOY!
WHAT TH..?? NO! NO! YOU CAN'T TAKE ME BACK THERE!
HE BROKE INTO MY OFFICE AND THREATENED ME!
THAT'S IT! COME ALONG LIKE A NICE BOY AND WE WON'T HAVE TO PUT A STRAIGHT JACKET ON YOU!
YEAH, THAT'S THE GUY WHO ESCAPED FROM THE ASYLUM TWO DAYS AGO! NOW WE'LL PUT HIM AWAY FOR KEEPS!
NO! NO! YOU CAN'T TAKE ME AWAY! IT'S ALL HIS FAULT .. HE WANTS TO KEEP MY MIRROR ...MY MIRROR OF THE FUTURE! LET GO OF ME!
HE'S REALLY IN BAD SHAPE! YOU'RE SURE HE WON'T ESCAPE AGAIN?
NOT A CHANCE! HE'LL ROT IN THE NUT HOUSE..
C'MON, GENIUS! WE GOT A NICE PADDED CELL WAITING FOR YA!
YOU CHEATED ME, YOU FOOL! YOU THINK YOU CAN ESCAPE FROM ME ...WELL YOU CAN'T! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE FROM ME... NEVER... NEVER!
CLANG!
4

THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT, AND THE HOWLING OF THE DEPRAVED MADMAN ECHOES THROUGH THE CORRIDORS ' AND THEN THERE IS SILENCE AND THE ATTORNEY S ALONE ,,

I WONDER WHAT THE OLD GEEZER MEANT BY THAT CRACK! I'LL NEVER ESCAPE HIM! HUH! I'VE ESCAPED HIM ALREADY! HE'S AS GOOD AS IN THE NUT HOUSE.

NOW ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS HAVE THIS THING ANALYZED, FIND OUT HOW IT WORKS, AND MAKE A MILLION DOLLARS ' HMM. I WONDER WHAT I'LL LOOK LIKE IN FIVE YEARS.

INTO THE MIRROR HE LOOKS. EYES OF GREED AND HUNGER .

SLOWLY, EVER SO SLOWLY, THE FACE COMES INTO FOCUS ..

LIKE A DREAM WITHOUT END, A TERROR BEYOND ALL IMAG-INATION

HE SEES THE FACE THAT IS HIMSELF FIVE YEARS FROM

NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE ,, IT'S A JOKE ' A HOR-RIBLE ,, GHASTLY JOKE!

HE SCREAMS AS HE SEES HIMSELF IN THE FUTURE! AND IN THAT INSTANT, BEFORE HIS MIND PLUNGES INTO THE DEPTHS OF MADNESS, HE KNOWS WHAT THE OLD MAN MEANT! HE WILL NEVER ESCAPE...

THE END

pushed it open. Then he spoke. "Rather than explain matters to you I will let you see things for yourself. The year is 1693, the month is June, and the day is the fifteenth. Come and watch with me."

As though some mystic force were guiding him, Henry Conrad rose from his chair and walked over to the side of the Uninvited Guest. They were looking into an old colonial living room where a man with long brown hair, dressed in colonial garb, was standing facing . . . the devil! The devil spoke, "Oh, Branders Conrad, you have summoned me, from the world below, by calling my secret name three times. I am here to listen to what you desire of me. So speak, oh mortal man and have no fear."

Branders Conrad was not the kind of a man to know fear. He had fought pirates and Indians . . . and won! Now, he wanted the most deadliest knowledge ever desired by mankind, and he was willing to pay the price.

"I want the power of second sight," he said, "so that I can look into the future. Give me this and my soul is yours. I want the power *now*, so let's seal the bargain."

The Uninvited Guest commented to Henry, "That little disgusting creature happens to be me. Now you will see how the pact was signed."

The devil took a knife from his pocket and made a cut in his arm. He let some blood drip into a small dish. Then he made a cut in Branders' arm. The blood from this wound dripped into another dish. The devil then poured his blood into Branders' wound and Branders' blood into his own wound. It was a double blood transfusion.

"From now on," announced the devil, "Part of me will always be with you. My blood will flow with your blood through your veins. And part of you will always be with me. Whenever you wish to know the future you merely cover your eyes and repeat the words: *Estea, mortia, futoro.* And now, if you will forgive me, I must be on my way. Seems a man in France is also calling me. Have to make a pact with him."

Branders Conrad turned to the fireplace and stared into the dying embers. Then he turned around and covered his eyes with his hands and said,

"I want to look into the future. Three things I wish to know this moment. *How rich shall I be? The kind of a woman I will marry? And how will I die?*"

When he finished making his requests he repeated the three words the devil had told him to use. There was a blinding flash and a picture appeared above the fireplace. It showed a table full of gold. This vanished and then came the picture of a very beautiful woman. The third picture was that of a man being burned by fire. Branders shouted with an anguished cry that pierced the household.

"Of what good is gold and beauty if I have to die and lose my soul?"

The wall closed and the Uninvited Guest motioned to Henry to sit down. Again the mystic force made him take this seat. He listened as the uninvited guest spoke.

"They were all like your ancestor . . . wanted power from me. Of course they had to pay the price. But they didn't think about it when they summoned me. Only after they had my gifts did they feel they had lost the world. Really, if more people had sense they wouldn't sell their souls to me. I hope I've helped you tonight. Must be on my way to the regions below. Some important pressing matters."

It was morning when Henry awoke. He had slept in the chair all night. He gazed at the paper in the typewriter. Evidently he must have finished the chapter for he had written that he had found definite proof that his ancestor had made a pact with the devil. Half-dazed, he went downstairs alone to the kitchen, Frances was still asleep. He opened the back door. The rain had stopped during the night but the ground was still muddy. Suddenly, his face froze with horror. There, on the ground, were footprints! The print of a shoe and next to each shoe mark the print of a cloven hoof!

THE END

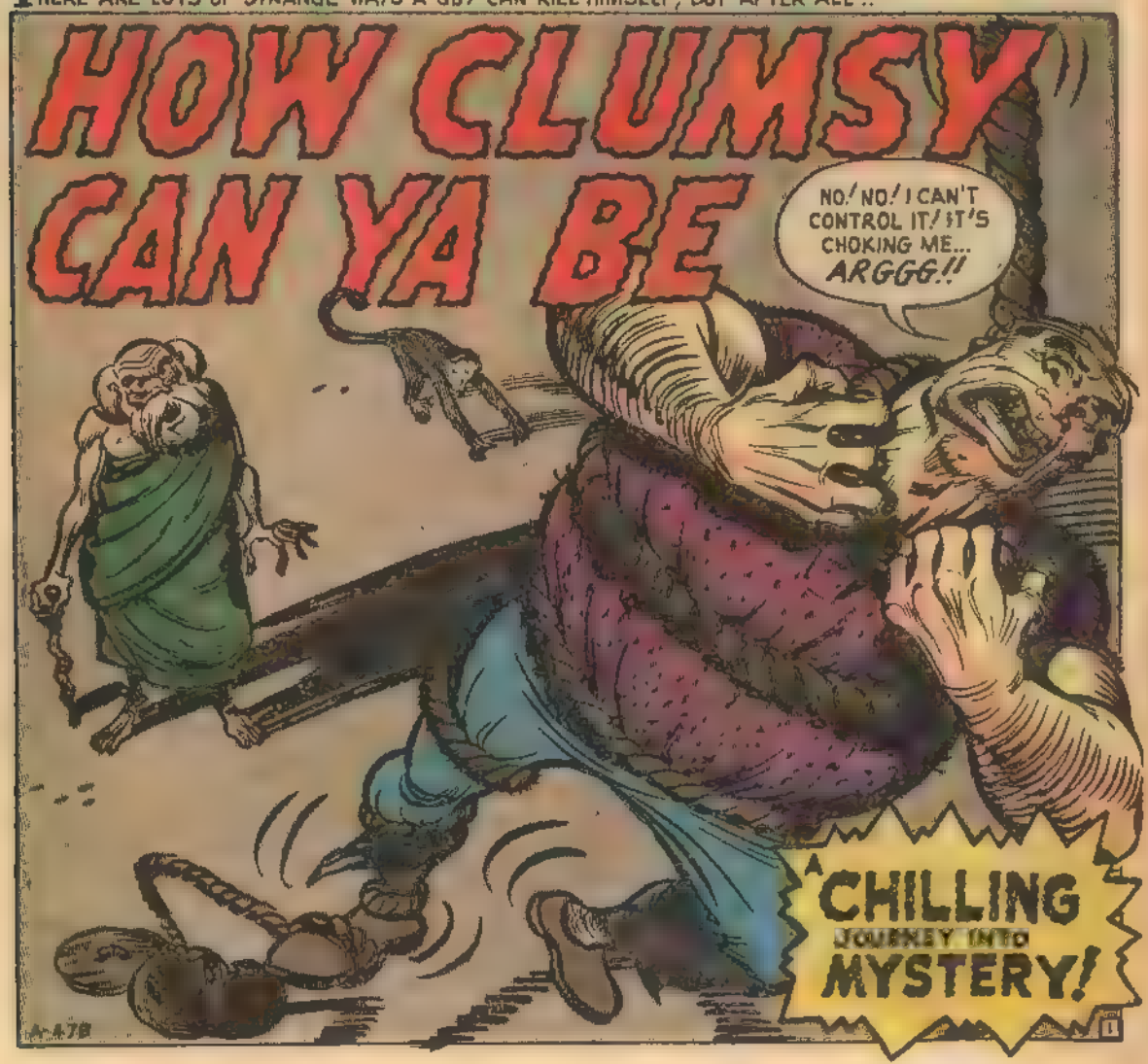
OUR STORY BEGINS DEEP IN THE HEART OF MYSTERIOUS INDIA, WHERE AN AMERICAN IS LEARNING THE SECRETS OF MAGIC FROM A YOGI FAKIR...

WHILE HIS ANCIENT TEACHER WATCHES, HAL BURNS BEGINS HIS LESSON. THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX IN THE WORLD..

UP HE CLIMBS, HAND OVER HAND, ASCENDING THE RIGID SWAYING ROPE HIGHER AND HIGHER...

THERE ARE LOTS OF STRANGE WAYS A GUY CAN KILL HIMSELF, BUT AFTER ALL ..

HOW CLUMSY CAN YA BE



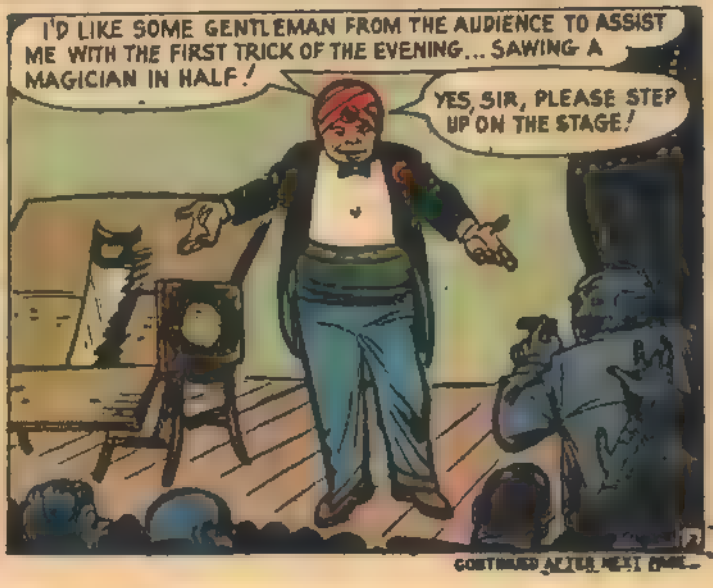
WITH SWIFTNESS AND A DEFT HAND THE OLD YOGI BRINGS THE ROPE DOWN AND DISENTANGLES HIS CLUMSY STUDENT...
YOU DID IT WRONG AGAIN! WHY CAN'T YOU DO A TRICK ONCE WITHOUT BUNGLING IT?
IT... WASN'T MY FAULT! IT'S THAT LOUSY ROPE!
BAH! YOU BLAME THE ROPE FOR YOUR OWN SLOPPY PERFORMANCE! I'VE TAUGHT YOU ALL I KNOW BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'LL NEVER BE A MAGICIAN!
BAH! YOU'RE ALWAYS PICKING ON ME! MAKING ME NERVOUS... THAT'S WHY!
AND BY HEAVEN ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU PAY FOR IT! I KNOW YOU'RE USING YOUR POWER TO MAKE A FOOL OF ME!
LET'S TRY AN EASIER ONE .. TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND WALK ACROSS THAT BED OF LIVE COALS! THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE LEARNED BY THIS TIME!
SURE, THAT'S A SNAP! BUT DON'T DO ANY-THING TO MAKE ME NERVOUS THIS TIME!
THE GLOWING EMBERS SEND UP SCORCHING WAVES OF HEAT AS HE PREPARES TO WALK ACROSS ON NAKED FLESH...
THERE'S NOTHING TO THIS ONE! I'VE DONE IT A FEW TIMES BEFORE!
AT FIRST HE TREMBLES, UNSURE OF HIS MUSCULAR CONTROL AS HE PUTS HIS BARE FEET DOWN ON THE RED-HOT COALS, BUT HE FEELS NO PAIN...
SEE? I TOLD YOU I COULD DO IT! THERE'S NOTHING...
OOOOFFFFYAAAAAA

IT'S NO USE! YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP! YOU'RE JUST A CLUMSY IDIOT WHO ALWAYS BUNGLES UP A GOOD TRICK!
I...I TRIPPED ON ONE OF THOSE BLASTED COALS!

AS HE TURNS TO GO BACK TO HIS HUT, THE OLD MASTER DOES NOT SEE THE LOOK OF HATRED IN HIS PUPIL'S EYES...HATRED WITH THE VENOM OF THE SNEAKING COBRA!

IN TWO WEEKS I'LL BE BACK IN THE STATES AND PUT ON A MAGIC SHOW OF MY OWN! TOO BAD YOU WON'T BE AROUND TO SEE YOUR STAR PUPIL BUNGLE IT UP!

AND SO THE WOULD-BE MAGICIAN LEAVES INDIA, AND RETURNS TO THE U.S., WHERE HE PREPARES FOR HIS FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE...

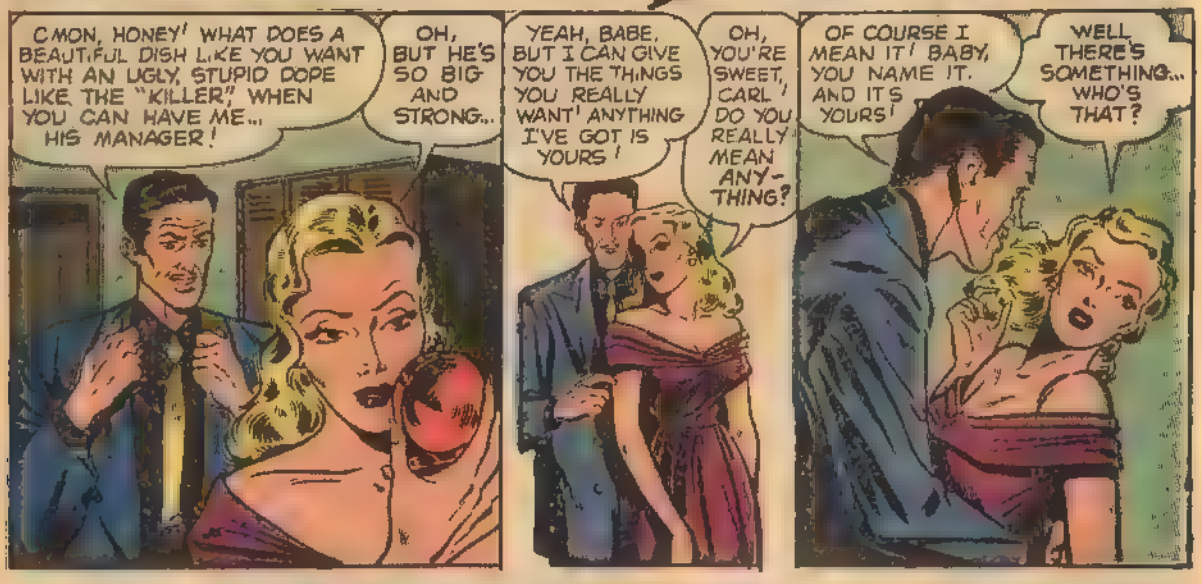

I'D LIKE SOME GENTLEMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE TO ASSIST ME WITH THE FIRST TRICK OF THE EVENING... SAWING A MAGICIAN IN HALF!
YES, SIR, PLEASE STEP UP ON THE STAGE!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PANEL...

FIRST, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I GET INTO THIS PLAIN WOODEN BOX! THEN I WILL ASK THE GENTLEMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE TO BEGIN SAWING THRU THE SOFT PINE WOOD...
HE'S HALFWAY THRU ME NOW, BUT OF COURSE, MY YOGI MUSCLE CONTROL PREVENTS ME FROM FEELING ANY PAIN AT ALL!
AND NOW HE HAS SAWED COMPLETELY THRU THE BOX!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION, SIR, AND NOW YOU WILL SEE THE GREATEST MIRACLE OF ALL TIME...
BOY, THIS TRICK MUST BE LAYIN' THEM IN THE AISLES, AND THAT YOGI CALLED ME A CLUMSY FOOL!
YOU HAVE SEEN THE GENTLEMAN FROM THE AUDIENCE SAW ME IN HALF AND NOW I WILL BRING THE TWO HALVES OF MY BODY TOGETHER AGAIN!
AW.. IT'S A FAKE!
PHONY!
BUT SUDDENLY AN ELECTRIFIED SHUDDER SWEEPS THRU THE CROWD AS THE MAGICIAN SHRIEKS...
NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE! IT CAN'T BE!
HOW COULD I HAVE BUNGLED THAT TRICK?!
THE END

BE CAREFUL WHEN YOU STEAL A MANIAC'S GIRL FRIEND !! MUG !

THRU THE DOOR


C'MON, HONEY! WHAT DOES A BEAUTIFUL DISH LIKE YOU WANT WITH AN UGLY, STUPID DOPE LIKE THE "KILLER," WHEN YOU CAN HAVE ME... HIS MANAGER!
OH, BUT HE'S SO BIG AND STRONG..
YEAH, BABE, BUT I CAN GIVE YOU THE THINGS YOU REALLY WANT! ANYTHING I'VE GOT IS YOURS!
OH, YOU'RE SWEET, CARL! DO YOU REALLY MEAN ANY-THING?
OF COURSE I MEAN IT! BABY, YOU NAME IT. AND IT'S YOURS!
WELL, THERE'S SOMETHING... WHO'S THAT?

DEEP IN THE MIND OF THE BRUTE STIRS THE PRIMORDIAL URGE TO DESTROY THE ONE WHO STEALS HIS WOMAN...
HE LUMBERS FORWARD SLOWLY IN STEPS THAT SEND HOLLOW ECHOES THRU THE PASSAGE-WAYS UNDER THE STADIUM...
HATE IN HIS EYES LIKE DEEP, BURN... FIRE...
THE WILD EXPRESSION OF AN ANIMAL CLOSING IN FOR THE KILL...
HE'S CRAZY! WE GOTTA BREAK FOR IT... RUN, HONEY, RUN!
YES, HE'LL KILL US!
CARL BLACK FLEES WITH THE GIRL, PLUNGING INTO THE TORTUROUS LABYRINTH OF DAMP CORRIDORS...
QUICK, INTO THIS ROOM! WE'LL LOCK HIM OUT!
HURRY! HE'S COMING!
LOCK THE DOOR! (GASP!) QUICK!
WE'RE SAFE! WE CAN GET OUT THE BACK WAY TO...
AIEEEEE!

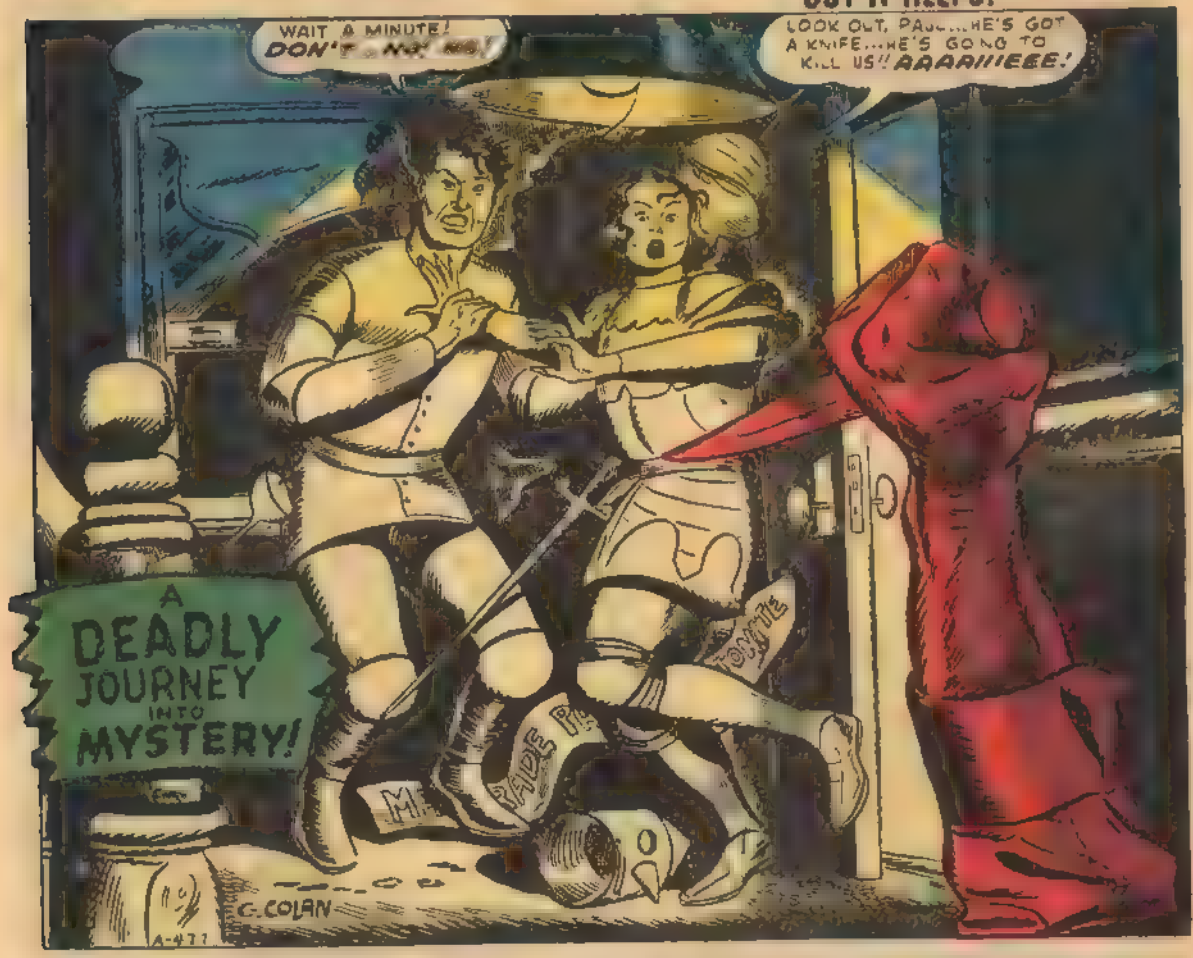
GASPING FOR BREATH, STUMBLING WILDLY THEY FLEE THRU THE REAR EXIT THAT LEADS TO ANOTHER CORRIDOR..
THERE'S NO STOPPING BECAUSE CARL BLACK KNOWS THE KILLER'S STRENGTH, HIS ABILITY TO TEAR A MAN LIMB FROM LIMB LIKE A RAG DOLL...
(GASP!) HE'S GAINING ON US!
I CAN'T RUN ANY MORE! (PUFF!)
HE FEELS THE HOT BREATH ON THE BACK OF HIS NECK! HE IS AFRAID OF THE VENGEANCE OF THE MAN HE HAS BETRAYED...
KILLER, WAIT! YA GOTTA LISTEN TO ME! I DIDN'T MEAN TO TAKE HER AWAY FROM YOU! DON'T DO ANYTHING!
CARL, THAT ROOM! IT HAS AN IRON DOOR!
MAYBE WE CAN MAKE IT... IF WE CAN LOCK HIM OUT!
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE IT!
QUICK, CARL! SLAM THE DOOR! LOCK IT.. OR HE'LL GET IN! THERE'S NO ESCAPE IN THIS ROOM!
UHHH... I'M TRYING! HE'S STRONGER THAN I AM!
I...I CAN'T DO IT! HE'S FORCING IT OPEN!
LOOK OUT! HIS HAND!

I'LL MAKE HIM GET HIS ARM OUT!
AARRGGH!
BOY THAT WAS QUICK THINKING, BABY! HE'D HAVE RIPPED ME APART... BUT WE'RE SAFE NOW!
ARE YOU SURE WE'RE SAFE? HE CAN'T GET IN?
OF COURSE, HE CAN'T GET THRU THAT IRON DOOR UNLESS WE UNLOCK IT!
THAT'S ALL I WANTED TO KNOW CARL DARLING AND NOW I'M GOING TO HOLD YOU TO YOUR PROMISE! THAT YOU'D GIVE ME ANYTHING I WANTED!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? GREAT SCOTT! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOUR FACE, YOUR TEETH?
IT'S REALLY NOTHING FOR YOU TO WORRY ABOUT, CARL! IT'S JUST THAT I WANT YOUR BLOOD! VAMPIRES MUST HAVE BLOOD TO LIVE!
AND SO CARL BLACK HAS COME TO THE CROSSROADS' IN THE SPLIT SECONDS LEFT TO HIS LIFE, HE MUST DECIDE HOW HE WILL DIE...TORN APART BY THE MAN HE BETRAYED OR DRAINED OF HIS BLOOD BY THE WOMAN HE HAS STOLEN... WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
THE END

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A CORPSE TO FIND...

THE HIDING PLACE

BUT IT HELPS!


WAIT A MINUTE! DON'T... NO! NO!
LOOK OUT, PAUL...HE'S GOT A KNIFE...HE'S GOING TO KILL US!! AAAAIIIEEE!
A DEADLY JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY!
G. COLAN
A-47

IT'S YOUR HUSBAND, ANN! YOUR HATEFUL HUSBAND HAS CAUGHT YOU AT LAST! HE'S GOING TO KILL PAUL!
NO! JEB... DON'T... I--I...
MY WIFE AND MY BEST FRIEND... YOU'RE BOTH CHEATS ...AND YOU'RE BOTH GOING TO DIE!

LOOK AT HIM GO DOWN, LIKE A SACK OF FLOUR! YOU'RE SAFE NOW! BUT WHY IS PAUL LOOKING AT YOU IN THAT FUNNY WAY?
WHY ARE YOU STARING LIKE THAT? IS HE?? IS HE??
YES, HE'S DEAD. YOU'VE MURDERED YOUR HUSBAND!

OH, PAUL, WHAT'LL WE DO?? THEY'LL CATCH US...AND IT'LL BE THE ELECTRIC CHAIR! YOU... YOU'VE GOT TO STAND BY ME, PAUL!
DON'T WORRY, BABY! IT JUST SAVES US THE TROUBLE OF FINDING SOME COMPLICATED WAY TO GET RID OF HIM! WE WERE GOING TO KILL HIM ANYWAY!

NOW LET ME TAKE CARE OF THIS! GET BACK TO THE PARTY AND DON'T LET ANYONE COME OUT INTO THE HALL FOR A WHILE! I'LL FIND A GOOD HIDING PLACE FOR THE BODY!
YES, PAUL! I'M GLAD YOU'RE GOING TO STICK WITH ME! IT PROVES YOU REALLY LOVE ME!

THAT'S RIGHT, ANN! GO INSIDE, LOCK THE DOOR AND STAND THERE! GUARD THAT EXIT WITH YOUR LIFE, OR IT MAY MEAN YOUR DEATH...

NO! I'LL GO CRAZY IF I THINK THAT! I KNOW PAUL LOVES ME AND I'VE GOT TO TRUST HIM! PAUL IS CLEVER...HE'LL FIND A GOOD HIDING PLACE FOR THE BODY!

SUDDENLY YOU NOTICE BABS AND FRED, THEY'RE DRUNK, AND HEADING FOR THE DOOR...

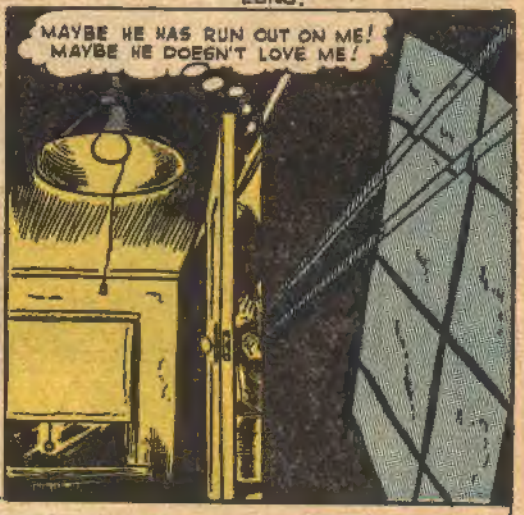
YOU'VE GOT TO THINK FAST! YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP THEM INSIDE OR PAUL WON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO GET RID OF THE BODY...

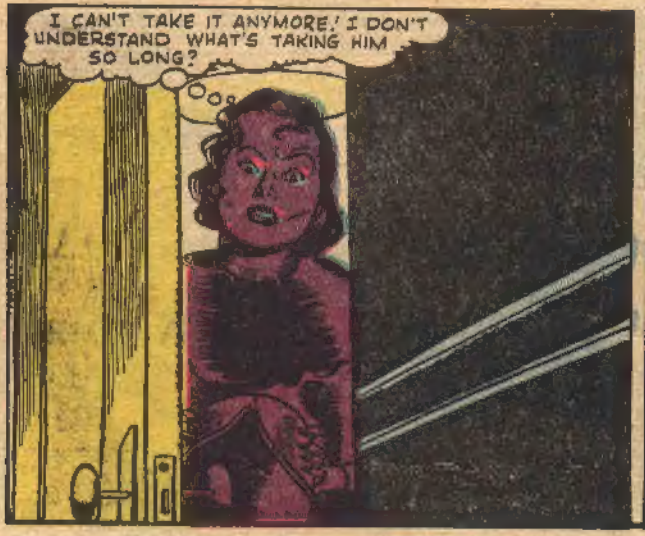
ER...NOBODY CAN LEAVE YET! WE'VE GOT TO STAY HERE UNTIL THEY GIVE OUT THE PRIZE FOR THE BEST COSTUME!
HEY, SURE! THE PRIZE...(HIC!) BET I GET THE BOOBY PRIZE!

WHERE'S PAUL, ANN? HE'S GONNA WIN...(HIC!) WITH THAT TIN MAN OUTFIT FROM THE WIZARD OF OZ! VERY CLEVER COSTUME!
YEAH! PROBABLY GET FIRSHT PRIZE...I NEVER GET FIRSHT PRIZE! THAS THE TROUBLE WITH THESH ART STUDENTS' MASQUERADES! I NEVER WIN!

OH, PAUL? HE'LL BE RIGHT BACK! HE WENT OUT TO FIND SOMETHING! HE SHOULD BE BACK ANY MINUTE! NOW YOU TWO GO ON AND DANCE UNTIL THEY GIVE OUT THE PRIZES!
(HIC!)...OKAY, JOAN OF ARC... SEE YA LATER!

YOU GET RID OF THEM ALL RIGHT, BUT HOW LONG CAN YOU KEEP IT UP? WHAT'S TAKING PAUL SO LONG?



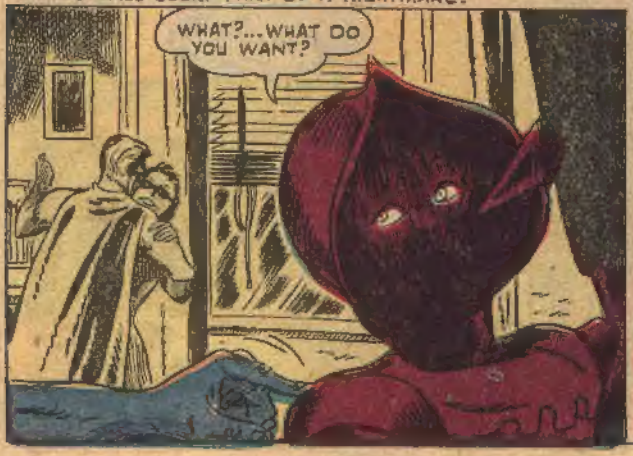


YOUR HEART IS A POUNDING ANVIL, THROBBING OUT A DEATH SENTENCE, UNTIL YOU DASH INTO THE GARDEN AND SEE HIM STANDING UNDER A TREE...

WE'VE JUST GOT TO STAY HERE AND PRETEND THAT NOTHING'S HAPPENED! OH, DARLING, I'M SO AFRAID! I HOPE YOU FOUND A GOOD HIDING PLACE! NO...DON'T TELL ME WHERE IT IS, DON'T SAY A WORD! JUST HOLD ME IN YOUR ARMS!

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHERE YOU HID HIM! THEN IF THE POLICE DO CATCH UP WITH US, NO MATTER WHAT THEY DO TO ME, I WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL THEM A THING!

SO YOU DANCE TO THE THROBBING MELODY OF THE ORCHESTRA, AND EVERYTHING SEEMS TWISTED UP LIKE A CRAZY FANTASY! THE CRAZY COSTUMES, THE MUSIC, THE MURDER...ALL SEEM PART OF A NIGHTMARE!



YOUR FIRST IMPULSE IS TO TURN AND RUN! THE FEAR IS LIKE A BALL OF ICE IN YOUR STOMACH! BUT YOU PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER AND...
WHY, YES! I'M ANN NEWTON! IS ANYTHING WRONG? I--I MEAN...
NO, MISS NEWTON! IT'S JUST THAT THERE'S A TELEPHONE CALL FOR YOU IN THE STUDY!
OH, YOU SCARED ME HALF TO DEATH! I--I GUESS IT MUST BE THAT COSTUME! IT'S REALLY VERY TERRIFYING!
YEAH, IT IS KINDA GRUESOME! MAYBE I'LL WIN A PRIZE WITH IT! BUT YOU BETTER TAKE THAT CALL!
BOY, FOR A MINUTE I THOUGHT THE JIG WAS UP! I COULD'VE SWORN HE WAS GOING TO PULL OUT A BADGE AND PUT HANDCUFFS ON US! I WONDER WHO COULD BE CALLING ME!
HELLO, HELLO, ANN? IS THAT YOU?
YES, THIS IS ANN NEWTON! WHO IS THIS?
NOW LOOK, HONEY, I GOT SCARED AND BEAT IT! WE'RE THRU, BUT DON'T WORRY, THEY'LL NEVER FIND THE BODY! I FOUND A TERRIFIC HIDING PLACE FOR IT! HELLO? HELLO, ARE YOU LISTENING...
THEN, THEN WHO IS... AAAIIEEE!
THE END